

EDITORIAL

From the Author's desk

ORAL PATHOLOGY AS A DENTAL SPECIALITY IN INDIA

Recognition of the merits of the speciality of oral pathology in the minds of the Indian dental fraternity is long beyond due. This science that investigates the causes, processes and effects of diseases affecting the oral and maxillofacial regions lays the foundation for all the other dental specialities and serves as a unique link between basic medical sciences and clinical dentistry. However, the basic lack of understanding of the significance of this speciality stems from our failure to educate the student of dentistry in their early years regarding the same.^[1] Further compounding this fact is the unjust projection of oral pathology as a just a speciality with lucrative career options and nothing beyond. Oral pathology could be called as the epitome of research in dentistry, given the larger area available for research and the plethora of issues waiting to be explored regarding the causes and effects of disease processes. But the research benefits of this speciality are negated by the noticeable lack of infrastructure and funding for research in the dental institutions across our country. Thus, research in oral pathology and dentistry per se is confined to postgraduate dissertations.

Oral pathology is one of those unique and rare specialities in science, where research meets practice. The oral pathologist has

the distinction of meeting the patients, observing the clinical presentation of the disease process, investigating the cause of the pathology and determining the final histologic diagnosis based on careful clinico-radiologic-pathologic correlation. Herein lies the unique opportunity for the clinician to conduct research and later translate the findings into clinical practice. Being a mute witness to the lack of awareness of such benefits and the failure of recognition of oral pathology as an essential contributor to the science of dentistry is deplorable. The need of the hour is to create centers of excellence in oral pathology in each dental institution, with adequate infrastructure and material for quality dental research. Such an initiative should be encouraged by the Dental Council of India (DCI) by way of including requirements for the same in the DCI regulations that may be planned for the future. Conducting original research and publishing in indexed journals should be made obligatory for all the faculty members in oral pathology across the country.

A Einstein

*Department of Oral Pathology and Microbiology,
Rishiraj College of Dental Sciences and Research Centre,
Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.
E-mail: einsbertin@gmail.com*

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